

B'nai Israel

The Newsletter of Temple B'nai Israel

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Rabbi's Corner

Shalom, dear friends. It is good to be back and have the opportunity to share an ideological controversy—and controversy and argument is what Jewish study has always been about. The commencement address by author Michael Chabon at Hebrew Union College in May (see p. 2 for links to all the articles mentioned here) has stoked heated argument: Rabbi David Ellenson and Dr. Joshua Holo, both of H.U.C., released a public statement addressing the controversy; Rabbi Ammiel Hirsch, of Stephen Wise Free synagogue, wrote them a letter in response; Rabbi Clifford Librach reacted to all three; and many others related their own stories (see link to Morin Zaray's account on p. 2). All five pieces will be available in the synagogue, and I hope you will read them and wrestle with the ideas, so that we can all discuss our reactions.

Chabon's address needs to be taken seriously. He speaks from a standpoint of a liberal man of the world who has distanced himself from Jewish life. He urges the Jewish leaders of the future to break walls, to inter-marry, to refute tribal traditions. He rejects religious practice, singling out Havdalah (which distinguishes night from day, Shabbat from the workweek). But Havdalah, by partitioning off darkness, allows us to recognize light. If there were no special days, how would our lives have special moments? I am reminded of Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince*, in which the boy is told by a fox:

“To me, you are still nothing more than a little boy who is just like hundred thousand other little boys. And I have no need of you. And you, on your part, have no need for me. But if you tame me, then we shall need each other. To me, you will be unique in all the world. To you I shall be unique in all the world.”

Uniqueness is a blessing that makes us who we are. Could it be lost? What would be the cost of Judaism passing from the world (which to Chabon is not farfetched, nor worthy of lament)? Our sages claimed that what sustained our people amid rising and falling empires was our language, our traditions—our very uniqueness. Is it not contradictory to ask us to assimilate and blend into other cultures and then proclaim the importance of diversity? If communities lose their uniqueness, what is left? **Continued on p. 5, “Rabbi”**



July Events

Sun., July 1, 11:30 a.m. – Lunch & Learn Potluck

(Moses: Birth of a Hero)

Sun., July 1, 1 p.m. – Welcome Back Potluck

Fri, July 6, 7:30 p.m. – Shabbat Services w/ Rav Maya

Sun., July 8, 11:30 a.m. – Lunch & Learn Potluck

(Moses: Growing Up)

Mon., July 9, 7 p.m. – Temple Board Meeting

Fri., July 13, 7:30 p.m.— Shabbat Services w/ Rav Maya

Sat., July 14, 8 p.m. – Cheboygan Havdalah

Sun., July 15, 11:30 a.m. – Lunch & Learn Potluck

(Moses: Ordination)

Fri., July 20, 7:30 p.m.— Shabbat Services w/ Rav Maya

Sun., July 22, 11:30 a.m. – Lunch & Learn Potluck

(Moses: The Mission)

Fri., July 27, 7:30 p.m.— Shabbat Services w/ Rav Maya

Sat., July 28, 10 a.m. – Bar Mitzvah of Sage Stuchell

Sun., July 29, 11:30 a.m. – Lunch & Learn Potluck

(Moses: The Journey)

Article Links

Links to the articles mentioned by Rav Maya on p. 1:

- **Michael Chabon's Commencement Address:** <https://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-arts-and-culture/262965/michael-chabon-commencement>
- **David Ellenson's Public Statement:** <https://www.jta.org/2018/05/25/news-opinion/invited-critic-israel-speak-jewish-universitys-graduation>
- **Ammiel Hirsch's Letter:** <https://www.scribd.com/document/382273886/Letter-Huc-Jir18>
- **Clifford Librach's Response:** <https://www.tabletmag.com/scroll/264582/paying-the-price-for-abandoning-jewish-peoplehood>
- **Morin Zaray's Account:** <http://atlantajewishtimes.timesofisrael.com/why-i-walked-out-on-my-graduation>

Rabbi Ben's Top Ten

Over the past two years, I have been blessed with the opportunity to learn and grow with Temple B'nai Israel. The knowledge gained here will hopefully be the basis of a successful rabbinate. Below are ten particularly salient lessons.

Prayer: When done right, prayer need not be a solitary activity. It can bring communities together, offering both personal introspection and communal experiences: healing a broken heart, praying for a common cause.

Mourning: Though I appreciate sharing times of joy, I have also seen how rabbinic duty includes mourning and grieving. The opportunity to accompany an individual in their sadness, to bring comfort in a difficult time, is a sacred task.

Learning: The study sessions that I prepared for in the most detail did not always lead to the most successful classes. Rather, the sessions approached with a true desire to teach the material were the ones that brought the most opportunity for learning.

Failure: Learning from failure can turn it into success.

Youth: Connecting with the young people of our congregation provides an opportunity to pass down my passion for religion. Every interaction is a chance to inspire a student, to help them further their relationship with Judaism on its deepest levels.

Gratitude: Accept compliments as given. While humility is a virtue, receiving a compliment is a form of a blessing and need not be turned away.

Engagement: Welcome critiques as a way to develop my skills. There is no perfect rabbi, but learning from the past and from others can create a successful rabbinate.

Open-mindedness: There are many different views in a congregation, even views that may only be supported by one person. Part of being a rabbi is serving every different view and treating each individual with the same respect. I must help individuals to view disagreements as a healthy part of their deep care for this congregation.

Profession: Being a rabbi is not only my professional duty, but rather it is a profession that affects my entire family.

Blessings: This is the most rewarding and fulfilling job that I could ever imagine for myself. I have been blessed by being welcomed into a community that has allowed me to be its teacher, its student, and its rabbi. Words alone cannot describe the joy I have felt in so many moments. The opportunities this congregation has afforded me have created the groundwork for my rabbinate. I will be forever grateful to my family in Petoskey.

Donations Received

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>General Fund</u></p> <p>Steven Fishman & Bonnie Josephson Brad & Becky Kranig</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Perpetual Kaddish Fund</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Trudi Rightsell—in memory of Rosalyn Goldstick</i></p>
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“Rabbi,” cont’d from p. 1

Another controversial idea in Chabon’s address was his criticism of Israel. It is strange that someone who propagates diversity and complexity refuses to see Israel in its entirety, its complexity. He criticizes the settlers in Hebron and the extreme Haredim (ultra-Orthodox Jews) who have been violent toward young girls. I share this criticism. But ultimately both the settlers and the abusive Haredim are part of my people. We share a destiny as Jews in Israel. These Haredim are only one small group of extremists in the much wider Haredim community: not all Haredim throw stones, nor do all settlers live in enclaves in Hebron.

Rabbi Ammi Hirsch, in his letter, raises several important issues: the basis of Reform Judaism in 21st century; what to pass on to the next generation; particularism versus universalism; and continuity and peoplehood.

Rabbi Librach does an excellent job reacting to these questions as well as posing others. He criticizes Reform Judaism in America for abandoning an ideological platform, for not committing to serious Jewish practice, for giving up its uniqueness and losing its core Jewishness. He worries about assimilation (“We have been hugged to death”) and criticizes American Jews’ loss of interest and care toward Israel. Personally, I find Librach’s criticism much more worrisome than Chabon’s, but I suggest you read all the articles carefully and form your own opinions. We shall convene to have a good Jewish discussion addressing these topics.

Funds / Named Donations Available

- Temple General Fund Newsletter Fund
- Prayer Book Fund Building Fund
- Irene Gordon Memorial Fund Oneg Fund
- Lee and Miles Jaffe Memorial Fund
- Religious Education Fund
- Stacy McCracken Memorial Youth Enrichment Fund
- Alvin’s “Helping Hand” Rosenhaus Memorial Fund
- Tree of Life Fund (\$100 Per Leaf)
- Aubrey & Gerald Meyerson Perpetual Kaddish Fund
- Donor Wall Tile Fund (\$48 per tile, plus freight)
- Tribute Fund (packets of five tributes for \$90/pack)

Temple B’nai Israel Donation Form

Name: _____
 Address: _____

 Phone: _____
 Email: _____
 My contribution is in honor or memory of:

Circle which fund you are designating (above) and then mail your check and this completed form to:

Mark Rothman, Treasurer
 Temple B’nai Israel
 PO Box 2416
 Petoskey MI 49770

Retreat Registration

Registration is now open for the L’Dor v’Dor Intergenerational Retreat, which will take place on the weekend of August 24th at the scenic and rustically serene Clear Lake Educational Center in the central upper peninsula. To register, visit <http://bit.do/wildretreat>. For more information, contact Carol Ellstein at cgeinstein@gmail.com.

Temple B'nai Israel
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Located at the corner of
 Waukazoo Ave. & Michigan St.
www.TempleBnaiIsraelofPetoskey.org

5778

Calendar of Events
 Tammuz / Av | July

2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wed.	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
July 1 11:30 a.m. – Brunch & Learn w/ Rav Maya 1 p.m. – Welcome Back Podluck Brunch	2	3	4	5	7:30 p.m. – Shabbat Services w/ Rav Maya 9:12	7 <i>Parshat Pinchas</i>
8 11:30 a.m. – Lunch & Learn w/ Rav Maya	9 7 p.m. – Temple Board Meeting	10	11	12	13 <i>Up North Bike Tour Begins</i> 7:30 p.m. – Shabbat Services w/ Rav Maya 9:08	14 <i>Parshat Matot-Massei</i> 8 p.m. – Hazon Havdalah in Cheboygan w/ Rav Maya
15 11:30 a.m. – Lunch & Learn w/ Rav Maya	16	17	18	19	20 7:30 p.m. – Shabbat Services w/ Rav Maya 9:03	21 <i>Parshat Devarim</i> <i>Tisha B'av</i>
22 11:30 a.m. – Lunch & Learn w/ Rav Maya	23	24	25	26	27 7:30 p.m. – Shabbat Services w/ Rav Maya 8:55	28 <i>Parshat Va'etchanan</i> 10 a.m. – Bar Mitzvah of Sage Stuchell
29 11:30 a.m. – Lunch & Learn w/ Rav Maya	30 <i>Summer Camp Begins</i>	31	Aug. 1	2	3 6:15 p.m. – Pre-Neg @ Charlevoix Band Shell 7 p.m. – Shabbat Service @ Charlevoix Band Shell 8:47	4 <i>Parshat Eikev</i> 8 p.m. – Havdalah Service & Tour of Petoskey Synagogue